

Issue 24 | January 2008

# PLAYZINE

Free Magazine for Handheld and Wii Gamers. *Pass it on to your friends and family*

**win**  
THE GUITAR  
HERO BAND  
BUNDLE FOR  
the Wii!

**REVEALED!**

## SONIC and THE BLACK KNIGHT

Sonic gets medieval on you!

**REVIEWED!**

**PRINCE  
OF PERSIA**  
By Royal  
appointment

**PREVIEWED!**

**READY 2 RUMBLE:  
REVOLUTION**  
The gloves are off!

**REVIEWED!**

**SONIC UNLEASHED**  
Super Sonic or super chronic?

**REVIEWED!**

**BIG BANG  
mini**  
Explosive stuff!

**REVIEWED!**

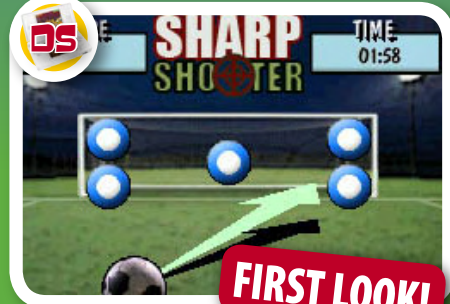
**POPSTAR GUITAR**  
A rival to Guitar Hero?

**FIRST LOOK!**

**FOOTBALL  
ACADEMY**  
Football focused



**MYSIMS PARTY**  
The Sims go wild!



# WELCOME



Traditionally, this is one of the quietest times in the gaming calendar, but we don't see any sign of that here. Take this issue, for example. We've got two Sonic games, Prince of Persia, Castlevania, Bomberman and the return of Ready 2 Rumble. Does that sound quiet to you? Nah, us neither! Enjoy the mag.

Dean Mortlock, Editor  
HGZine@gamerzines.com

DON'T MISS THIS!



## Sonic and the Black Knight

A new Sonic game is still big news. Find out all you need to know about this Wii-exclusive title

CHECK THIS!



## Sonic Unleashed

PLUS LOADS MORE REVIEWS!

Prince of Persia  
PopStar Guitar  
Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia

**Damien McFerran**  
Our first Sonic fan this month reviewed Unleashed, but what did he think of it?



## Ready 2 Rumble: Revolution

The classic fun fighter returns!




## My Pet Shop

Animal magic?



**Dave Perrett**  
While young David spent a bit of quality time with the Black Knight.



## QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

### PREVIEWS

- NINTENDO WII**
- MySims Party
  - Ready 2 Rumble – Revolution
  - Sam & Max Season Two
  - Sonic and the Black Knight

- NINTENDO DS**
- Bomberman 2
  - Football Academy
  - Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time
  - My Pet Shop

### REVIEWS

- NINTENDO WII**
- Sonic Unleashed
  - PopStar Guitar
- NINTENDO DS**
- Prince of Persia
  - Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia
  - Big Bang Mini



## MORE FREE MAGAZINES! LATEST ISSUES!

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If you are reading this, then you didn't choose "Play" when Adobe Reader asked you about multimedia when you opened the magazine.

Without the multimedia playing, the magazine will look correct, but you will be missing out on all of the extra content built into each issue, like videos, animated screenshots, annotations, quizzes, competitions and more.

We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

info



FROM: EA  
A BIT LIKE... Mario Party  
WEB: www.mysims.com  
OUT: 2009



# MYSIMS PARTY

Latest News

Fight for your right to party!

## WHAT'S THE STORY?

In a nutshell, MySims Party is probably exactly what you'd imagine it to be, so you get a wide variety of party games but with a Sims theme.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?

You're looking at a total of 50 games for

the Wii version of the game and 40 for the DS one, and early indications are that there's going to be plenty of variety in what's on offer. One game, for example, has you controlling a snowboard, while another has you shooting pumpkins or running away from a giant robot. Originality is definitely not something we have to worry about here.

## WHEN DO WE GET MORE?

The only release date we currently have is '2009', but we strongly suspect we'll see MySims Party on the shelves of your local games shop sometime in the next few months.

## ANYTHING ELSE THAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

Although MySims Party probably has the least in common with the original Sims license, we still think that it'll be a lot of fun to play. 🎮

Shake your thing with DJ Candy!



## Best Bit

What impresses us most about MySims Party is the sheer number and variety of the games on offer. With a whopping 50 minigames for the Wii version and 40 for the DS one, there's sure to be something here to appeal to everyone – whatever your age or favourite style of gaming.



Can you outrun the robot in Robo Assault? Let's hope so!



Fancy a bit of multiplayer shooting? You can do that, too.



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**SHRED ALONG WITH YOUR FAVOURITE TRACKS ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.**

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- Play in single player or multiplayer modes using local wireless



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PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



Nintendo DS<sup>™</sup> Lite

Nintendo DS sold separately

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Vicarious  
Visions

NINTENDO DS

Gibson

red octane

ACTIVISION



CONTROL →



info



**FROM:** Konami  
**A BIT LIKE...** Well, Bomberman 1 for starters  
**WEB:** [www.hudsonentertainment.com](http://www.hudsonentertainment.com)  
**OUT:** 13th February



# BOMBERMAN 2

Explosive stuff!

## WHAT'S THE STORY?

Oh come on, you surely know all about this guy by now? Mazes? Bombs? Exploding men? Yep, that's the one, but this new DS-exclusive version of the massively popular series brings some very original features along with it.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?

On top of the running, bombing and blowing up, the game will also feature mission-based gameplay where you have to complete tasks within a set time limit – including blowing up a certain amount of blocks, or escaping from a level. The thoughtful approach to the game's design will ensure that the new features are sure

to fit right in with the more traditional gameplay, too.

## WHEN DO WE GET MORE?

Oh, you don't have long to wait for the review at all, as the game's out on the 13th of next month. With any luck, we should have the full and definitive review for you in the next issue.

## ANYTHING ELSE THAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

When you eventually get bored of the appearance of your character, you now have the ability to customise him with over 160,000 possible additions.

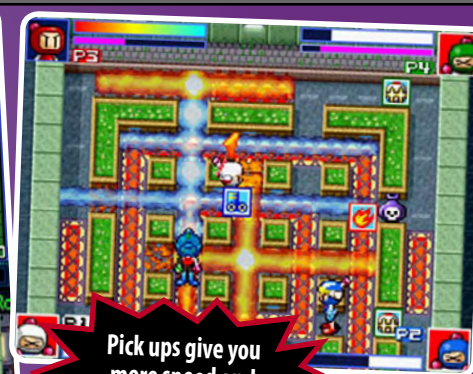
Bomberman is also famed for its multiplayer mode (with some versions having a whopping 10 players onscreen at any one time) and that trend will continue here, giving you four players via the WiFi connection and up to eight with the wireless service. So another hugely playable game for the DS? Very possibly. 💣

Latest News

Each Zone ends with a big boss battle.

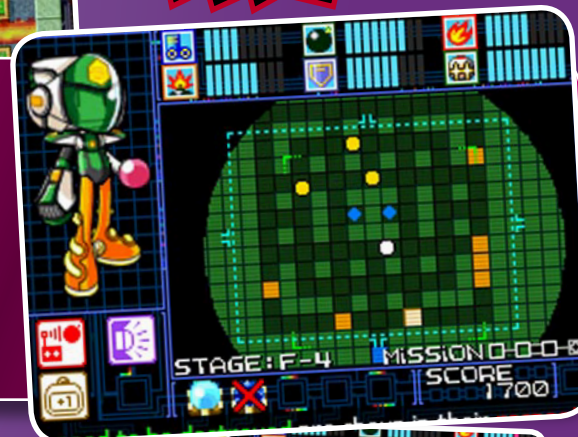


Pick ups give you more speed and extra bombs.

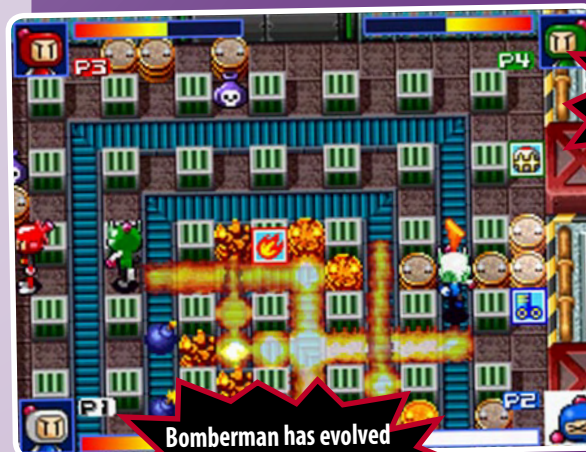


## Best Bit

We were chuffed to find out that the developers are using the DS's top screen to very good effect. This means that you get a full breakdown of your character's skills and also a useful map showing the locations of the enemy and any collectables, too.



The single-player mode has plenty to keep you busy, too.



Bomberman has evolved over the years, but the gameplay remains solid.



info



FROM: EA  
A BIT LIKE... FIFA meets  
Brain Training  
WEB: [www.eagames.co.uk](http://www.eagames.co.uk)  
OUT: March



# FOOTBALL ACADEMY

He shoots... he scores!

## WHAT'S THE STORY?

It's football Jim, but not as we know it. Rather than being a straight game of soccerball or even a managerial sim, the aim behind Football Academy is to help you increase your knowledge of the beautiful game.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?

Well, we know that it's being developed in Canada by EA themselves – in fact, it's the same team that creates the annual cash drain that is FIFA. First impressions seem to suggest that Football Academy is a collection of mini-games and challenges that have been designed to help you learn more about general football strategy, positioning and technic. It's a crazy idea to be sure, but one that just might work.

## WHEN DO WE GET MORE?

The game's only just been announced, but is currently slated for a release in

March, and is down to be a DS exclusive. We reckon that, with the right amount of EA Sports slick presentation and polish, Football Academy could well be one of the more interesting DS releases this spring.

## ANYTHING ELSE THAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

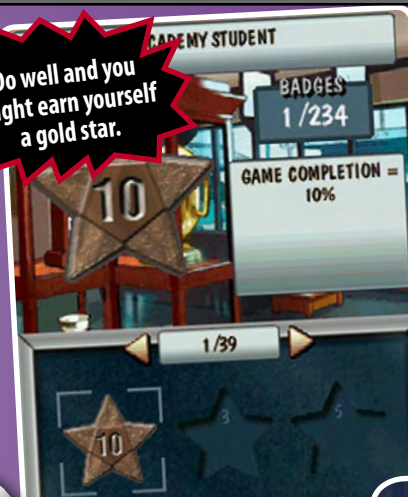
As the game is being created by the EA Sports crew, then you probably won't be too surprised to hear that the game comes complete with all the official FIFA licenses you could possibly ask for.

You should probably also know that there's been a tremendous amount of effort put into the design and style of the various mini-games. A quick look at the shots on this page should give you some idea of the variety here.

With a bit of luck we should be able to bring you much more on this very interesting and original game in next month's mag.

Latest News

Do well and you might earn yourself a gold star.

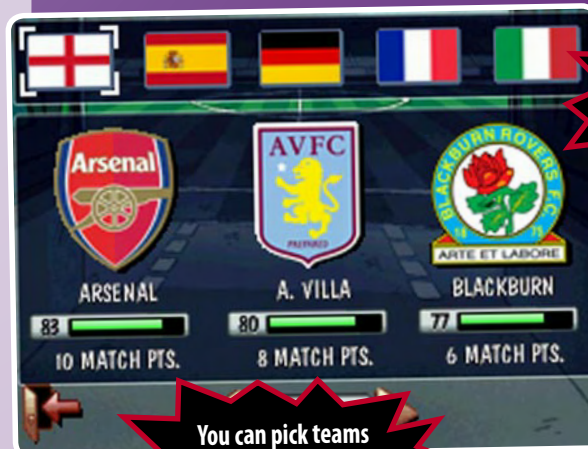
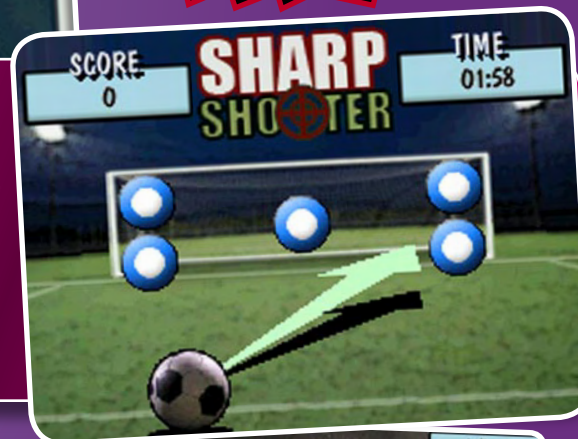


Despite initial reports, the numbers next to the players aren't their IQs.

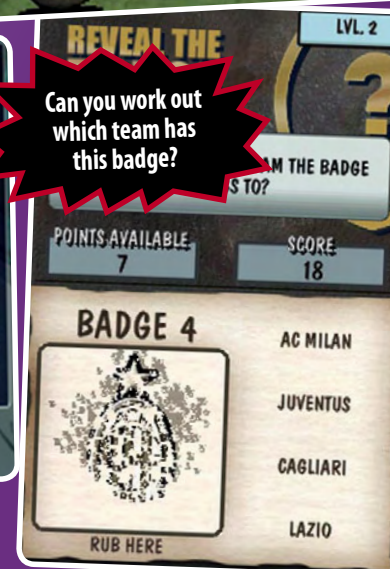


## Best Bit

We loved the original mixture of the game most of all. Sure, EA could've taken the dull route and made something that was little more than a collection of stats, but the fact that it all centers around a series of fun and original games makes it all the more appealing.



You can pick teams from Europe, as well as those closer to home.



Can you work out which team has this badge?



**We've seen the future of gaming, and it's good!**



**FROM:** Conspiracy Entertainment **OUT:** 2009

**N**intendo's Metroid Prime: Hunters was an early indication of how well-suited the DS was to the world of FPS titles but, surprisingly, since that game was released we've seen precious few examples of the genre. That is set to change with NoWay Studio's ambitious C.O.R.E. The Polish developer has recently secured European distribution for its 'next gen' 3D shooter and promises an experience that will blow your socks clean off. A strong multiplayer focus is also on the cards.



# SafeCracker

**FROM:** The Adventure Company **OUT:** 2009

**C**onverted from the PC version which was called "the best puzzle game of 2007" by the US edition of PC Gamer, *Safecracker* is one to keep an eye on. Hired by the family of a wealthy deceased oil baron to locate his will, it's your job to crack his 35 safes. Each safe is unique in design and requires plenty of brainpower to crack. This is essentially a puzzle game at heart, but the realistic focus should help it appeal to a wider audience.



# Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars

**FROM:** Rockstar **OUT:** March

**T**he more we hear about the latest GTA title the more we're convinced that the British tabloid press is going to have a field day. Showcasing the usual brand of violence and crime the series is famed for, Chinatown Wars will also feature a tattoo-based mini-game (where the player 'brands' new gang members using the stylus). Controversy aside, it should also contain the usual killer gameplay too.



# Stikoden: Tierkreisreis

**FROM:** Konami **OUT:** March

**K**onami's Suikoden series has been with us since the days of the 32-Bit PlayStation but this latest DS instalment marks a major shift in focus. Previous titles had features a range of characters but were essentially all taking place in the same universe, but Tierkreis showcases a whole new setting, and feels very different as a result. Thankfully the same compelling gameplay appears to be in place to keep hardcore fans happy.



## future releases

**Best start saving! Here are the top games coming soon...**

**We Ski and  
Snowboard**  
Wii  
March



**Gardening  
Mama  
DS  
Spring**



**Resistance:  
Retribution**  
PSP  
Spring

**Brave: Shamen's Challenge**  
DS  
Spring

**Dancing Stage**  
**Winx Club**  
Wii  
Spring

**Elite Forces:**  
**Unit 77**  
DS  
Spring

**FF Crystal  
Chronicles:  
Echoes of Time**  
DS/Wii  
Spring



## Martian Panic



FROM: Empire Interactive OUT: April-June

They say two guns are better than one when you're in a fire-fight and N-Fusion's Martian Panic is going to put this theory to the test. Set in a 1950's style world (much like the Destroy all Humans series), this quirky-looking 3D shooter will allow you to brandish two Wii Remotes as you take on the alien invasion force. Up to four players can join in, which equals an awful lot of Wii Remotes and some serious firepower!



## PURR PALS

FROM: Deep Silver OUT: 2009

Following hot on the heels of the DS version, Purr Pals is a game that is obviously aimed at the fairer sex. You get to select a kitten from 40 different breeds and then care and tend for them – this includes brushing them using the Wii Remote. Before you barf into the nearest receptacle, let's admit to ourselves that we all enjoyed Nintendogs, and this might be as enjoyable, if not more – after all, cats are way cooler than dogs. Fact.

## NASCAR Kart Racing

FROM: EA OUT: February

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. That is certainly the wisdom that EA would appear to be sticking to, as it's taken the long-running NASCAR series and turned the drivers into cute little characters in karts – very much like Nintendo did all those years ago with Mario and his chums. The NASCAR racing league might not have the same importance here as it does in the US, but this still have the potential to be a hugely enjoyable rival to Mario Kart Wii.



## Chrono Trigger

FROM: Square-Enix OUT: February

Following Square-Enix's recent DS remakes of Final Fantasy III and IV, Chrono Trigger is yet another classic RPG updated for a new generation of fans. However, unlike the aforementioned titles this isn't getting a 3D makeover, which is understandable when you witness the quality of the 2D visuals. A plotline that spans time and space is coupled with a hugely original combat system and some truly likeable characters.



## future releases

More games heading your way in the not-so-near future

**Hot 'n' Cold**  
DS  
Spring

**Bikini Zombie Slayers**  
Wii  
Spring

**Finkles Adventure**  
DS/Wii  
Spring

**X-Men Origins: Wolverine**  
DS/PSP/PS2  
May

**Avalon Code**  
DS  
April-June

**Colin McCrae: Dirt 2**  
DS/PSP/Wii  
2009

**Cid The Dummy**  
PS2  
2009





*Ellen Whitaker's*

# HORSE LIFE



**Coming Soon**

<http://horselife.deepsilver.com>



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

Wii NINTENDO DS

DEEP SILVER

(P)2008 Deep Silver, a division of Koch Media GmbH, Austria. NINTENDO DS, Wii AND THE Wii LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO.



CONTROL →



# PREVIEWS

THE HOTTEST GAMES, COMING TO A CONSOLE NEAR YOU!



## SONIC AND THE BLACK KNIGHT

WILL SONIC GIVE US A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER?

Wii



## READY 2 RUMBLE: REVOLUTION

Wii



## SAM & MAX SEASON 2

Wii



## FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

DS



## MY PET SHOP

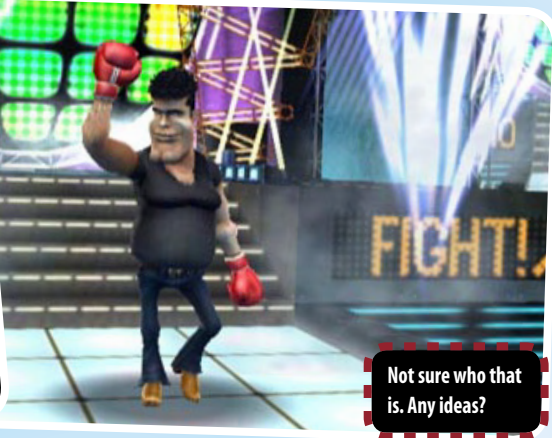
DS



info



FROM: Atari  
A BIT LIKE... Punch Out  
WEB: www.atari.com  
OUT: March



# READY 2 RUMBLE REVOLUTION

Let's get ready to rumble! Again!

**A**lmost 10 years after it proved a knockout on Sega's ill-fated Dreamcast console, cartoon boxing franchise Ready 2 Rumble is heading to the spectacularly successful Nintendo Wii. Of course, back then the

concept of motion-controlled games was but a twinkle in a boffin's eye. However, following the success of the boxing element of Wii Sports, it seems a natural fit for the console, and pummeling an opponent into submission with the Wiimote and Nunchuck should be even more satisfying than with the Dreamcast's notoriously uncomfortable controller. As for those opponents, Ready 2 Rumble Revolution will feature a roster

of 18 cartoon boxers, all apparently parodies of celebrities from the worlds of sports, music and movies. So if there's someone on the box who's winding you up, the game will enable you to punch a 'Rumble-ized' version of them about the head, face and torso until they can no longer physically withstand the assault any longer. Don't expect too much blood and teeth however, as it's just for fun. But while nobody's pretending that it's a serious boxing simulation, the over-the-top action will see you fight in five

spectacular environments, progressing from the backstreet gym all the way to the big Las Vegas showdown.

## HAND IN GLOVE

The fighting facts...



- ARE YOU READY?
- WHO ARE YOU?
- MAN 2 MAN

### ARE YOU READY?

To add to the atmosphere, the game will be hosted by so-called Voice of the Champions, Michael Buffer – the man famous for boxing's trademarked call to gloves, "Let's get ready to rumble!"

"READY 2 RUMBLE  
REVOLUTION WILL  
FEATURE A ROSTER OF  
18 CARTOON BOXERS"

HOW READY

HOW GOOD

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Could be a real knockout

# info

## SAM & MAX

FROM: Atari  
 A BIT LIKE... Sam & Max  
 Season One  
 WEB: [www.telltalegames.com/samandmax](http://www.telltalegames.com/samandmax)  
 OUT: 2009



# SAM & MAX SEASON TWO

More fuzzy logic with the freelance police...

Once you couldn't move for point & click adventures, with all manner of improbable puzzles mesmerising a generation of PC gamers. At the lighter end of the

market were the escapades of Sam and Max, the self-styled freelance police duo comprising a dog in a suit (Sam) and some kind of hyperactive rabbity thing (Max). One of the more unlikely comebacks in recent years, the pointing and clicking transferred ably to the Wiimote, bringing the off-the-wall humour to a new audience. Following the success of the first outing, Season Two is coming to Wii in

its entirety, with all five episodes crammed onto one disc. In typical fashion, the adventure kicks off with a giant robot attack and proceeds to become increasingly surreal. The stylish cartoon graphics and trademark humour appear to be intact, as does the anything-but-lateral thinking required to solve some of the more obscure puzzles. By way of example, Sam & Max tackle the quandary of distracting some zombies by whipping

a brain out of a fresh corpse and offering to feed it to them. Expect this kind of lunacy and more, with the unlikely duo coming to your screens soon. 🐾

"SEASON TWO IS COMING TO THE WII IN ITS ENTIRETY, WITH FIVE EPISODES ON ONE DISC"



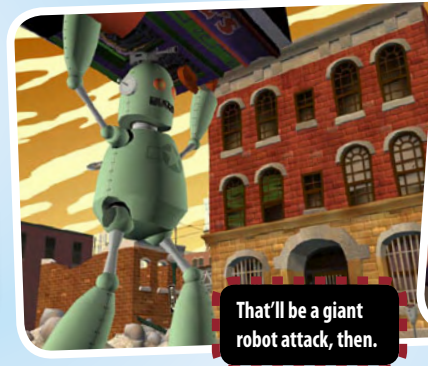
Their trusty motor enables them to get around quickly.



Expect to meet this kind of villain.



Roll over screen for annotations



That'll be a giant robot attack, then.



All in a day's work for our intrepid duo.

### HOW READY

●●●●●●●●

### HOW GOOD

●●●●●●●●

More classic gameplay coming to the Wii

# GUITAR HERO®

## WORLD TOUR

# UNLEASH YOUR INNER ROCKSTAR!



### WIRELESS GUITAR CONTROLLER:

- Re-designed for the ultimate playing experience, including:
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  - Also compatible with Guitar Hero® games for the Xbox 360®



### WIRED MICROPHONE:

- Sing along using the mic and infuse your own style into the music

**ROCK OUT ON THE GUITAR CONTROLLER  
OR ADD A DRUM KIT CONTROLLER AND A MIC  
FOR THE BAND EXPERIENCE**

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- The most authentic drums available, including:
- Quiet surfaces so you can hear the music
  - Pressure-sensitive pads allow creation of a wide range of sounds
  - Authentic arrangement of the pads to mimic an actual drum set with raised cymbals



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



Create your own rocker, choose from your favourite Guitar Hero icons or take the stage as the biggest rock stars around.



Compose, record, edit, and share your own music online. Download and play community-created content for free! \*\*



Rock out solo, with another guitarist or with a band. Kick it up with 4 vs. 4 Battle of the Bands play. \*\*

## COMING AUTUMN 2008

\*Additional faceplates sold separately \*\*Some features may be limited in the Wii™ and PlayStation®2 Guitar Hero World Tour games



PlayStation 2

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360 LIVE

Wii

NINTENDO DS

VICARIOUS VISIONS

GOAT

red octane

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activision.com



CONTROL →



info



FROM: Square-Enix  
A BIT LIKE... Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: My Life as a King  
WEB: [www.square-enix.com](http://www.square-enix.com)  
OUT: Spring



# FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: ECHOES OF TIME

Nintendo Wii, say hello to Nintendo DS...

In the short few years since the Wii and the DS turned the games industry upside down, there have been various flirtations between the big and little consoles. However, the abruptly named Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time is set to push the relationship when it explodes onto

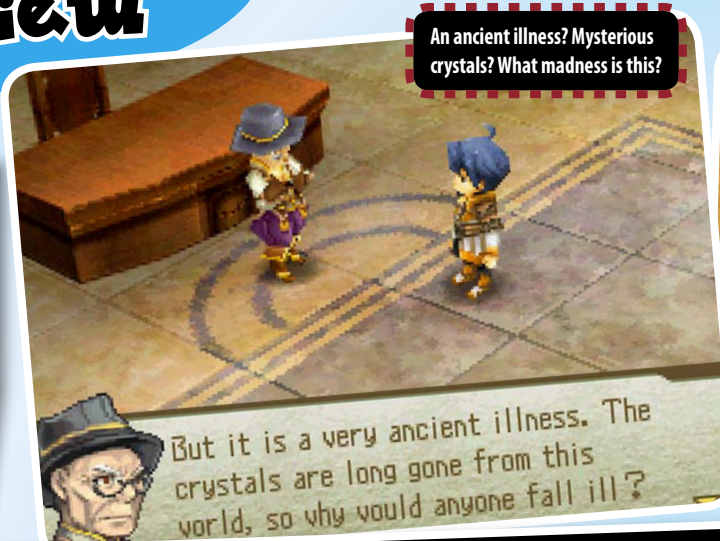
the scene as nothing less than the world's first cross-platform multiplayer adventure for the two Nintendo systems.

Set in the established universe of the more accessible Final Fantasy spin-off series, Crystal Chronicles, the all-new Echoes of Time boasts a typically outlandish story. To summarise: a triumphant return from a monster-infested forest marks the completion of the 16-year-old hero's coming-of-age ceremony. However, his joy is brought to a swift halt when it is discovered that a young village girl has gone down with a



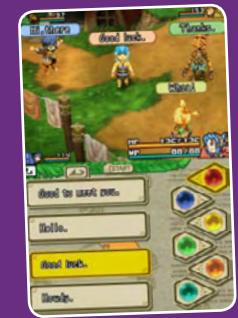
mysterious illness known as crystal sickness. Determined to obtain the cure, the hero steps out of the secluded village for the first time...

In other words, it's the usual nonsense. The big deal here though is that up to four players will be able to share the adventure using various



## connect FOUR

Multiplayer mayhem



- It's GOOD to TALK
- PHRASED OUT
- DRESS to IMPRESS

### It's GOOD to TALK

Nintendo's WiFi connection will enable up to four players to cooperate using any combination of Wii and DS hardware. Wireless communication will cater for up to four players using DS hardware, or alternatively one Wii hosting up to three DS players. Trust us, it might sound confusing, but it works very easily.

combinations of hardware and the magic of WiFi. And that's more impressive than any number of crystals. ✨

### HOW READY

### HOW GOOD



Final Fantasy to the power of four

"THIS IS THE FIRST CROSS-PLATFORM MULTIPLAYER ADVENTURE FOR THE TWO NINTENDO SYSTEMS"

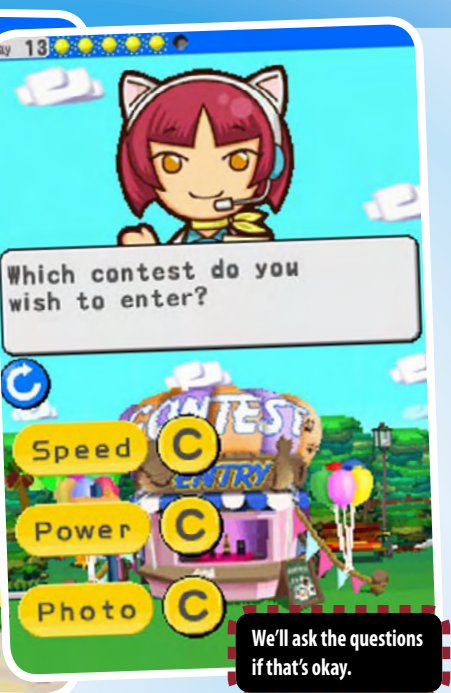
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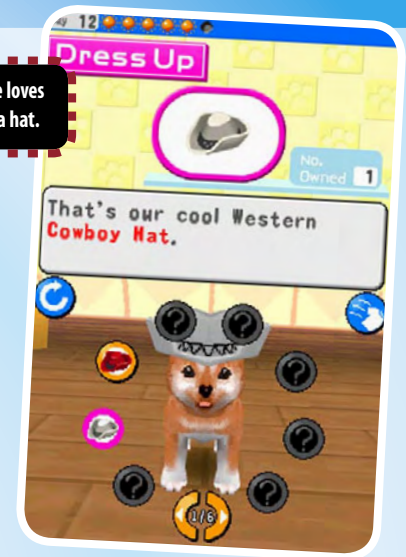
FROM: Square-Enix  
 A BIT LIKE... Tamagotchi,  
 Nintendogs  
 WEB: www.square-enix.com  
 OUT: Spring



Well done, you've caught a raccoon.



We'll ask the questions if that's okay.



Everyone loves a dog in a hat.



# MY PET SHOP

Get ready for some animal magic

Veteran Japanese developer Square-Enix may be better known for its epic Final Fantasy, Dragon Quest and Kingdom Hearts series, but it has yet to actively court

the pre-teen market. That is set to change with the release of My Pet Shop, a DS title aimed specifically at youngsters, or at least those youngsters whose idea of fun is cleaning up after a menagerie of caged beasts.

Described as boasting 'care and nurture' gameplay, the game will also feature what Square is claiming is a captivating storyline. This alleged 'animal adventure of a lifetime' sees

virtual pet shop boys and girls (mainly girls) attempt to run the best domestic animal retail outlet in all of Green Town.

However, it's not simply dogs, goldfish and sickly parrots that you'll be trading in, as there is more exotic fare among the 40 different animals on offer. There's an argument that pigs are more suited to a butcher's shop than a pet shop, but they will be available to buy, as will bears and pandas, the

keeping of which is generally frowned upon in the West. Sounds fun, and we'll have more for you very soon. 🐾

"It's not JUST DOGS either, AS THERE IS MORE EXOTIC FARE AMONG the 40 ANIMALS ON OFFER"

HOW READY

ANY GOOD



Release the beast inside...



# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

It's time for a brief hog history lesson...

The puzzle game Dr Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine was one of the many Sonic spin-offs.



Sonic struggled to make the transition from 2D to 3D, as Sonic 3D Blast (which isn't truly 3D) shows.

**S**onic may be about to swing a sword about in the forthcoming Sonic and the Black Knight, but the little blue dude has come a long way since he was first conceived in 1991. Back then, Sega's Mega Drive console was locked in a hardware war with Nintendo's SNES, but Mario's platforming genius gave the SNES fans bragging rights, and Sega needed a rival mascot. A rabbit, a dog and an armadillo were all considered, but they eventually settled on a blue hedgehog.

## THE NEED FOR SPEED

Sonic had something Mario didn't – speed – and it was this cool innovation that helped make 1991's Sonic the Hedgehog a worldwide smash – it sold more than four million copies.

Gamers camped out on Tuesday 24th November 1992 – known as 'Sonic Twosday' – to grab a copy of Sonic 2. It eventually sold more than six million copies, but while the next two sequels, Sonic 3 and Sonic and Knuckles, weren't bad, Sonic suffered as consoles entered the next generation. Sonic 3D appeared on Sega's Saturn, but the game lacked Sonic's trademark super speed. Further Sonic letdowns followed, and it wasn't until Sonic Adventure appeared on Sega's Dreamcast, that Sonic found form again. But just as things were picking up, the Dreamcast died a death and Sega made the bold decision to stop making consoles to concentrate on making games, so Sonic had to do something that Mario has never done – appear on a rival console.

The Sonic and Knuckles cartridge had a slot in the top for you to plug in your old Sonic games and open up new levels.



## CREAM OF THE CROP

Three of Sonic's finest moments



sonic 2

sonic spinball

sonic rush adventure

## sonic 2

The best of the original Mega Drive games, the second main Sonic installment was faithful to the side-scrolling, speedy fun of the original. But it also boasted cool new special stages, a useful new spin attack, a two-player versus mode and a helpful little fox called Tails. Oh, and you can play this classic on Wii's Virtual Console.

The GBA's Sonic Advance was the first unique Sonic game to appear on a non-Sega machine, and he has since starred on several consoles. But perhaps the most groundbreaking Sonic game was last year's Sonic and Mario at the Olympic Games, proving that even the most intense gaming rivals can, given time, kiss and make up. 🐾



## info



**FROM:** Sega  
**A BIT LIKE:** Sonic and the Secret Rings  
**WEB:** [www.sega.com/sonicblackknight/us/index.html](http://www.sega.com/sonicblackknight/us/index.html)  
**OUT:** 6th February

# SONIC AND THE BLACK KNIGHT

Take a step back in time with Sonic's quirkiest adventure yet...



Sonic with a sword? Don't worry... you'll get used to it!



Well, at least he'll never catch you if you decide to run away.

**J**ust when you think Sonic has seen it all, he travels 1,500 years back in time to a world of knights, magic and, erm, blue hedgehogs wearing red trainers. But don't worry – this is no boring history lesson, because Sonic and the Black Knight is a fun-filled action adventure that blends the much-loved Sonic characters with loads of chain mail-clad knights and

bloody great big swords, and it's showing plenty of early promise.

### GOOD KNIGHT

The game is set in the legendary 6th century world of King Arthur, but as they apparently had magicians and ladies in lakes back then, a blue hedgehog with super speed won't look too out of place. Merlina, a sorceress,

has summoned Sonic to help free King Arthur's realm, as Arthur himself has been turned into the evil Black Knight.

Billed as the second game in the Sonic Storybook series after the pretty decent Wii exclusive Sonic and the Secret Rings, this new adventure also draws some elements from the more recent Sonic Unleashed. Like Unleashed, the camera sits behind

## SPEED FREAK

Zippering through Sonic's latest adventure



ROLE PLAY

PAY  
Attention

SOUL  
POWER

## ROLE PLAY

While the game is all about fast-paced action, there is a sprinkling of RPG elements thrown in to keep things interesting. Doing good deeds will earn you the support of villagers, while those all-important rings and other collectable can help you to bribe other characters you'll meet along the way.

**"JUST WHEN YOU THINK SONIC HAS SEEN IT ALL, HE TRAVELS 1,500 YEARS BACK IN TIME"**

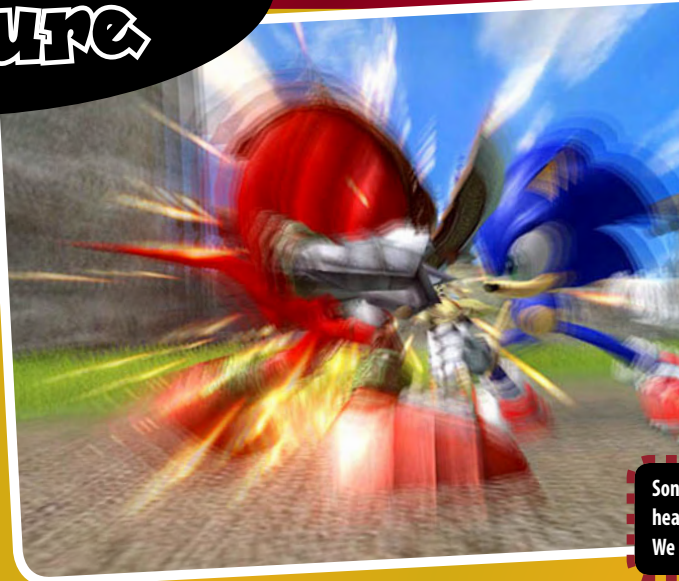
Sonic in a 3D view for most of the game before switching to the classic side-on 2D view for some of the game's more traditional platform moments, while there are also plenty of track-like racing stages thrown into the gaming mix too.





info

SONIC  
and the Black Knight



Sonic going head-to-head with Knuckles. We can't wait for that!



We're hoping that we'll also be able to use the sword to activate switches.



Well, it wouldn't be Sonic without something to slide along, would it?

**"FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, SONIC'S EQUIPPED WITH A HUGE SWORD"**

master the sword skills of both attack and block, and you can also use Caliburn to perform other actions, such as breaking down walls to make it easier for you to climb. But there is a problem with the sword, and that's the

fact that it could seriously disrupt Sonic's speedy flow. Luckily, you can still swing your sword and travel at full Sonic speed when you're taking on



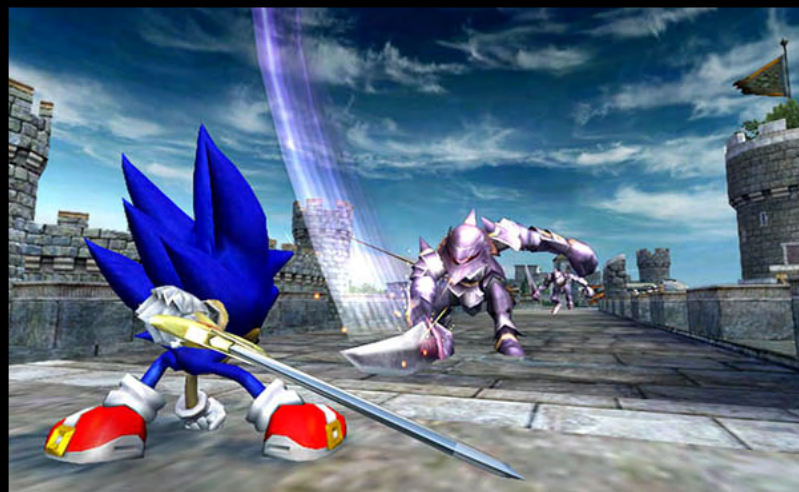
But while these elements of the game will be familiar to Sonic fans, the main new innovation – swordplay – won't.

## SOUL CALIBURN

Sonic's only weapons to date have been the spikes on his back and the odd bad joke, but now, and for the first time ever, he's equipped with a huge sword that you can swing about to take down any knights that dare to challenge you. Using the Remote to swing the sword, battles are much more complex than just chucking the blade, known as Caliburn, around the place and hoping for the best. To prove you're a true knight you'll have to



Roll over screen for annotations



Maybe you can use the sword to slow your fall, too.

lesser enemies, though when you're taking on more accomplished knights you will have to stop running, draw your blade and start fighting.

Another feature that sets the game apart is the RPG elements. Unlike other Sonic games, everything you do in this Dark Age realm has a consequence, and news travels fast, so you whether you choose to help villagers or not will affect your knight ranking





# BEST BIT

## A CUT ABOVE

As you'd hope for a Wii exclusive, Sonic and the Black Knight makes clever use of the motion controls. You'll have to use the Nunchuck to control the hedgehog's movement, while – and this is the fun part – the Remote is used to swing Sonic's sword, Caliburn. This is the first time Sonic has ever wielded a weapon other than his own spinning moves, so prepare for some full-on blade action and be sure to look after it – any sword with its own name deserves respect.



It's fair to say that this is one Sonic adventure we're really looking forward to.



The medieval setting works surprisingly well.

➔ and will alter the way that others help you. There will also be around 200 different items to collect on your journey, and an online mode allows you to trade these with you mates to help you complete the set.

## HIGH-SCORE TABLE

Along with Sonic, Knuckles, Shadow and Blaze make up the Knights of the Round Table, while other favourites such as Tails also make an appearance, though not in a knightly capacity. They've all been decked out to look like 6th century knights too, which helps to

add to the Arthurian setting. The 6th century location and huge swords may make this one of the weirdest Sonic adventures yet, but it's also shaping up to be one of the best, and we can't wait for Caliburn to swing into action. 🗡️



You can expect the usual amount of tricks and traps.

## HOW READY?

## ANY GOOD?



Weird but wonderful, this has definite potential

# QUICK QUIZ!



"KNUCKLES, SHADOW AND BLAZE MAKE UP THE OTHER KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE"

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# REVIEWS

THE BEST VERDICT ON THE BIGGEST GAMES AROUND!



## SONIC UNLEASHED

SONIC IS LET OFF HIS LEASH, BUT IS HE STILL QUICK OFF THE MARK?

THE  
**PLAYzine**  
FOUR-POINT  
REVIEWERS PLEDGE

- 1 If a game's rubbish then we're not afraid to say so
- 2 Our reviewers are hand-picked from the very best

- 3 We always play a game long enough to form an opinion
- 4 We love our games more than life. Well, almost



## PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE FALLEN KING



## CASTLEVANIA: ORDER OF ECCLESIA



## BIG BANG MINI



## POPSTAR GUITAR

## info



FROM: Sega  
A BIT LIKE...

Sonic the Hedgehog

WEB: [www.sonic-unleashed.com](http://www.sonic-unleashed.com)

PRICE: £39.99

PEGI AGE RATING: 7+



Sonic indulges in a solo game of 'pile on the robot'.



# Sonic Unleashed

Sonic gets saddled with a worrying case of split-personality

Poor old Sonic has taken quite a critical battering lately. His recent next-gen 360 and PS3 outing was massively hyped and failed to live up to expectations. However, Sega and Sonic Team insisted that they had listened to feedback when designing the blue marsupial's latest platform adventure, and so it's fair to say that there's been a noticeable level of anticipation with the release of Sonic Unleashed.

First things first... the game is thankfully a marked improvement over its predecessor and manages to capture some of the brilliant speed of the 16-bit originals, for the most part. You see, Sonic Unleashed is very much a game of two halves. The traditional breakneck speed of the early games is present, but it shares equal billing with the all-new 'Warehog' stages, which showcase the bestial talents of Sonic's alter-ego.

The story goes that Dr Eggman has harnessed the power of the Chaos Emeralds in order to fire a laser at Earth and thereby awaken a massive monster known as Dark Gaia. The activation of this weapon has an unwelcome side-effect on Sega's spiky blue mascot – at night he turns into the aforementioned Warehog, a hideous deformed creature with amazing strength and stretchy arms – like a lycanthropic Mr Tickle.



## SONIC BOOM BOY

Taking control of little boy blue



MOSTLY  
'ARMLESS'

WHERE  
HOG?

WHICH  
VERSION?

## MOSTLY 'ARMLESS

During the 'Sonic' part of the game things are controlled solely using the Nunchuck's analogue stick, but the 'Warehog' levels require you to become a little more involved – punching is handled by swinging your arms around like a loon! Thankfully you can also use a standard controller and ignore the motion controls altogether.

Some of the levels are truly breathtaking in their complexity.





The Warehog's combos are incredibly powerful.

Sonic's Warehog form is predictably slower and more powerful than his standard one.



The game's levels are based on real-world locations.



During the day Sonic is his normal self, and it's this portion of the game that will undoubtedly excite hardcore fans. Sonic hurtles through each level, tackling massive rollercoaster-style loops and collecting rings as the gorgeously rendered scenery flashes past in a blur. It all feels a little out of control at times but if you make a wrong turn you're not punished too harshly and as a result this portion of the game is a real blast.

If this review were based solely on these 'day time' levels then we wouldn't hesitate in giving Sonic Unleashed a high rating, but unfortunately there's another facet to the game that is rather

less enjoyable. When the moon rises Sonic transforms into his lumbering 'Warehog' form, and the tone of the game changes sharply as our hero is forced to engage in claw-to-claw combat with a variety of enemies, as well as delicately negotiating his way around each stage. It's a jarring change of pace that wouldn't seem so bad if it were in any other game. It's just the switch between the speed of the 'Sonic' sections and the laborious nature of the 'Warehog' stages that grates so harshly.

Sonic Unleashed unquestionably boosts the blue hedgehog's reputation and is a lot of fun to play, but we can't

help but wish that Sega has picked just one gameplay style and expanded on it rather than divide it so clumsily.

*Damien McFerran*

## Briefly Speaking

While the mixture of gameplay styles isn't as successful as it might have been, Sonic Unleashed still represents a massive improvement over the hedgehog's more recent – and disappointing – misadventures.



### PLAY TIME

HOURS

DAYS

WEEKS



### DIFFICULTY

EASY

MEDIUM

ARRGH!



### FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

YIPPEE!

## VERDICT

A return to form

7

## TOP TIP



During the fast-paced 'Sonic' levels, quick reactions are often the difference between success and failure. Therefore it pays to learn Sonic's new abilities, such as the 'Speed Drift' and 'Quick Step' as quickly as possible.



## QUICK QUIZ!

"When the moon rises, SONIC TRANSFORMS INTO HIS LUMBERING 'WAREHOG' FORM"



## info



**FROM:** Ubisoft  
**A BIT LIKE...** New Super Mario Bros  
**WEB:** <http://prince-of-persia.uk.ubi.com>  
**PRICE:** £29.99  
**PEGI AGE RATING:** 7+



Boss battles are tense and exciting affairs.

# PRINCE OF PERSIA The Fallen King

Our favourite Middle-Eastern royalty is back with a new image

Those of you that have gazed longingly at the PS3 and 360 versions of Prince of Persia and desired a slice of Arabic action might want to take note of this unique DS spin-off. While the game lacks the visual sheen of its next-gen counterparts, it does reinterpret the basic storyline using 2D action and stylus-based controls.

Ubisoft has pulled out all the stops here to give DS owners a totally exclusive and original experience. Although the general plot is the same as the other

versions, the Prince you control here is a more cartoon-like character and the overall tone of the game is more suited to the core audience of Nintendo's handheld marvel. The DS may not be as powerful as the current crop of home consoles but this game still looks great.

If you've played The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass then you'll have a pretty good idea of how the controls work in PoP: The Fallen King. The D-pad and fascia buttons are ignored in favour of a full touchscreen experience.

To get the Prince to run, you tap the far left or far right of the screen, and to slow his pace you simply move the stylus closer to him. Jumping is handled by tapping where you want the Prince to land and other activities such as striking enemies and sliding down walls are all handled by stabs from your stylus.

The system certainly takes some getting used to, but after a while it soon becomes second nature. It may lack the precision of a traditional 'pad and buttons' interface but what it lacks

## NEW AND improved

So, what's new then?



MIND  
the GAP

HALF  
AND HALF

HISTORY  
Lesson

### MIND the GAP

Although PoP: The Fallen King features a softer visual style, it doesn't mean that the game shirks away from the harsh realities of real life. For example, if the Prince hits the ground after a big fall he'll lose energy, and in some cases a sharp drop will kill him outright. Thankfully you can use the Prince's metal claw to grab walls and slide down them.

Your sidekick is capable of launching some seriously impressive magical attacks.





The story plays out via cartoon-style cut-scenes like this one.

Come back! Hey! I just want to know where the King is!



The locations are varied in terms of design and scope.

## QUICK QUIZ!

→ in accuracy it more than makes up for in fluidity – being able to string together a combination of moves with the stylus is incredibly rewarding, and the game design is forgiving so you're not punished too harshly when you fail – which is a positive thing given the sometimes unpredictable nature of the controls.

PoP: The Fallen King is jolly good fun while it lasts, which unfortunately isn't all that long. If you consider yourself to be a gamer of average ability then you'll probably be watching the end credits after a day or so of (hugely enjoyable)

play, but less-confident gamers might find that the challenge is balanced ideally.

Ubisoft's experiment with a stylus-driven control system could have gone horribly wrong but for the most part it's a rousing success. There are moments when you'll long for old fashioned digital input but these are few and far between. PoP: The Fallen King is a good example of how to successfully adapt a next-gen concept for a new audience, and deserves your attention if you love platform adventures.

Damien McFerran

## Briefly Speaking

Sporting a cute new visual style and totally stylus-driven control, Prince of Persia: The Fallen King is a tremendously enjoyable platforming romp that is more than worthy of your time, no matter how old you are.

## PLAYZINE Challenge

Completing PoP: The Fallen King doesn't take a lot of effort but once you've done so you could always try again on the harsher difficulty setting. There's little incentive to do so other than having bragging rights over friends, but the increased challenge does make it a lot more rewarding to beat.



The all-new Prince is just as acrobatic as his predecessors.

"POP: THE FALLEN KING IS FUN WHILE IT LASTS, WHICH UNFORTUNATELY ISN'T ALL THAT LONG"

### PLAY TIME

HOURS

DAYS

WEEKS

### DIFFICULTY

EASY

MEDIUM

ARRGH!

### FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

YIPPEE!

### VERDICT

Top platform action

8



**info**

**FROM:** Konami  
**A BIT LIKE...**

Metroid Fusion (GBA)

**WEB:** www.konami.co.uk

**PRICE:** £29.99

**PEGI AGE RATING:** 12+


Expect to see all manner of strange beasties in this game.

# Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia

**Fangs for the memories?**

**D**S owners are already 'fang-ful' for two top-quality servings of Castlevania action in the form of Dawn of Sorrow and Portrait of Ruin but publisher Konami isn't going to stop there – it's now unleashed a third title to get your pulse racing.

If you've played either of the aforementioned DS instalments (or any of the GBA Castlevania entries, for that matter) then the gameplay of Order of Ecclesia will be instantly familiar to you

– you move around a gigantic map fighting enemies and collecting various items, many of which imbue your character with special powers that allow them to progress past seemingly impassable obstacles.

While the gameplay is pure side-scrolling platform action – with fast-paced attacks and plenty of incredibly tense boss battles – there are many RPG-style concepts at work here, too. For example, your character gains

valuable experience from each encounter, and there are also several status-affecting spells to use.

With unlockable extras and a plot that contains more than a few twists, Order of Ecclesia will keep you glued to your DS for hours. The tried-and-tested format of these modern Castlevania titles may be getting a bit long in the tooth, but when the gameplay is this enjoyable we really don't mind admitting that we're total 'suckers' for it. Ahem. 🦋

Damien McFerran

Shanoa is rather handy with all kinds of different weapons.



Along the way you'll bump into different characters.

## FANGTASTIC

Something to get your teeth into...


**ALL WOMAN**
**GRAB A GLYPH**
**MASSIVE CRAB!**

## ALL WOMAN

Hardcore Castlevania fans will note that the gender of Order of Ecclesia's central character is a deviation from the norm – the series is famous for its swarthy male leads. However, pasty-faced Goth Shanoa is undoubtedly 'all woman' and charges into battle wearing the kind of outfit one would normally associate with a night out on the tiles.

## BRIEFLY SPEAKING

It's another Castlevania game for the DS, and it's pretty much business as usual. That's no bad thing though, and it's still as playable as it's always been. It does have a 12+ rating though, is it's unsuitable for younger gamers.

### PLAY TIME

HOURS

**DAYS**

WEEKS

### DIFFICULTY

EASY

**MEDIUM**

ARRGH!

### FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

**YIPPEE!**

## VERDICT

King of the Castle!

# 8

## info



FROM: SouthPeak  
A BIT LIKE...

Fantavision (PS2)

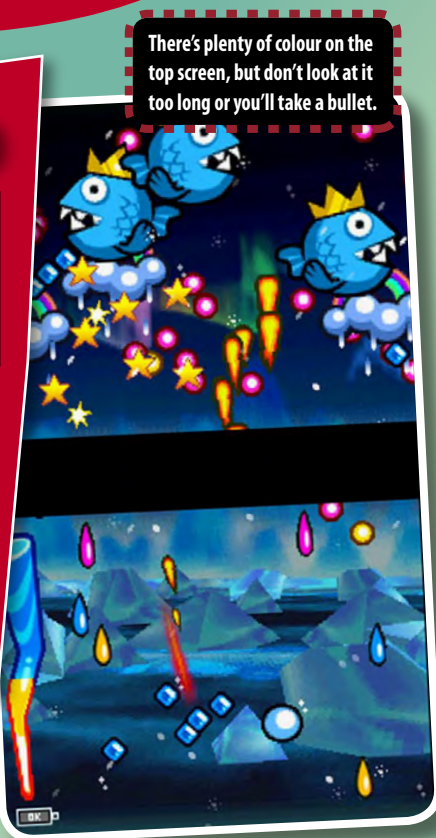
WEB: www.bigbang  
mini.com

PRICE: £19.99

PEGI AGE RATING: 3+



There's plenty of colour on the top screen, but don't look at it too long or you'll take a bullet.



Each of the stages has a very different graphical theme...



# Big Bang Mini

Light up the sky in this beautiful-looking game

We have to say that we became rather fond of this game. And the reason is very simple, and that's because, despite its graphical bells and whistles, at its heart beats a pure shoot-'em-up. And a pretty darned good one at that.

The idea is a simple one. Things move around the top screen and you move your ship around on the bottom one with the stylus. To shoot, you simply have to flick the stylus up the screen, but that does obviously mean

that you can't move and fire at the same time. This does take a bit of time to get used to, but it's not that long before it becomes second nature.

Explosions and effects vary from stage to stage – as each one has a very different theme – but they're all superb, with firework-style explosions popping off with enormous regularity. Then, when you clear a stage, you're rewarded with a further display.

More important than anything else though, is that Big Bang Mini is just lots of fun to play. The short stages, frantic gameplay and simple controls makes it perfect for gaming on the go, too. It's not a massive game, but you will definitely enjoy it while it lasts. 💣

Dean Mortlock



Links chain moves together to get some hefty point bonuses.

## TOP TIP



Although the fireworks do look lovely on the top screen, you're much better off ignoring them when you play the game, as you're sure to get hit by something if you do. There's always a colourful display to watch at the end of each stage anyway.



## Briefly speaking

Visually stunning, very playable and oodles of fun, Big Bang Mini is, at its heart, a fairly straightforward shoot-'em-up. It's also one with a great degree of style and a difficulty curve that makes it fun for all ages.

### PLAY TIME

HOURS

DAYS

WEEKS

### DIFFICULTY

EASY

MEDIUM

ARRGH!

### FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

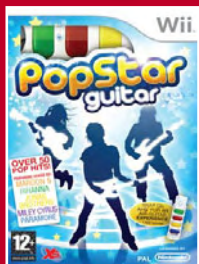
YIPPEE!

## VERDICT

Explosive action!

7

## info



**FROM:** Midway  
**A BIT LIKE...** Guitar Hero  
**WEB:** www.popstar-guitar.com  
**PRICE:** £34.99  
**PEGI AGE RATING:** 12+



# POPSTAR Guitar

Hey now, you're a rock star...

**W**e really wanted to like PopStar Guitar, as we love Guitar Hero and are of the opinion that there's no such thing as too many guitar games, but despite the very clever addition of the AirG peripheral (more on that in a bit), this is a game that sadly fails to match the

high standards of games like Guitar Hero and Rock Band.

The AirG is a plastic cover with four coloured buttons that clips over the Wii Remote, and you strum by flicking the Control Stick on your Nunchuck. This is a good thing, as it obviously saves you having to spend loads of

money on an additional guitar – and it works pretty well, too – but sadly, the game behind it is fairly average.

But why? Well, while the control method works fine, the look of the game doesn't really inspire. The graphics are basic at best, and there's none of the slick polish and attention to detail that other games in the genre have. Then there are the songs. There may well be over 50 of them, but you won't have heard of a lot of them and a high percentage are covers! The AirG is a nice idea, but it's just a shame that the game doesn't do it justice.

Dean Mortlock

There are plenty of options to customise your band's look.



"WHILE THE CONTROL METHOD WORKS FINE, THE LOOK OF THE GAME DOESN'T REALLY INSPIRE"

## TOP TIP



**You** can get a load of hints and tips – along with plenty of opportunity to spend the money you earn from gigs – by going to the Magazine area on the main screen. You can also play video of your songs here, too!



He may look happy, but I think he'd be much happier if he was starring in Guitar Hero.

## Briefly Speaking

PopStar Guitar plays like a cheaper version of Guitar Hero. The 50-odd tracks are much more suited to a teenage audience than Guitar Hero's might be, but the game is generally lacking too much to consider over others in the genre.

### PLAY TIME

HOURS

DAYS

WEEKS

### DIFFICULTY

EASY

MEDIUM

ARRGH!

### FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

YIPPEE!

## VERDICT

No guitar Hero

5

# SONIC UNLEASHED

Your one-stop guide to success in Sonic's latest epic adventure

If you've consulted our review of Sonic Unleashed then you'll be aware that what we have here is essentially two games for the price of one, as the blue hedgehog's latest adventure sees him switch between his normal self and an enhanced 'Warehog' persona, depending on the time of day. Given the marked difference in play styles, Sonic Unleashed takes a bit of getting

used to, and with this in mind we've compiled this handy guide in order to help you slip into Sonic's distinctive red sneakers with the minimum of fuss.

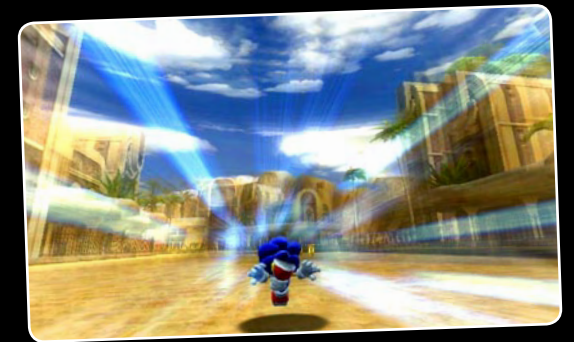
## TWO WAYS TO PLAY

The first thing you need to do is ensure you're comfortable with the two different methods of play. The daytime 'Sonic' levels are all about speed. Racing around each stage at a lightning-fast pace understandably requires pretty nifty reflexes on your part, but with special moves such as the Quick Step and Speed Drift at your disposal, negotiating each winding course is made that little bit easier.



## TIPS UNLEASHED

Quick tips for a quick hog!



- SONIC BOOM**
- SECRET SQUIRREL**
- ON A MISSION**

## SONIC BOOM

As Sonic collects rings you'll notice a meter in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen will fill up – defeating enemies and pulling off successful 'Speed Drifts' also has this effect. For each section of the meter that's full, Sonic has access to one speed boost. To execute this, simply swing the Wii Remote forward.

## SLOWING IT DOWN

The night-time 'Warehog' stages rely more on combat and platforming skill than pure speed. When in Warehog mode, Sonic has loads of raw power at his fingertips, which is lucky as he's constantly accosted by enemies during these levels. Thankfully he can use his 'Unleashed' power (as long as the gauge is full) and also scramble out of danger thanks to his extendable arms.



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## YOUR SAY!

Got something to say? Write and tell us!

## TOO MUCH TOO YOUNG

What is the deal with the people who work in game stores? I was in one recently – it was one of a chain, but I probably shouldn't mention which one it was – and this boy of about 12 tried to buy a copy of GTA: Liberty City Stories. The shop assistant rightly said that he couldn't sell it to him as he was too young, but then, when the boy looks sad, the assistant said that he could always sell it to his mum – who was stood with the boy – and that what they did with it then was up to them. With all the bad press about games and violence, you'd think people would be more sensible.

*Stephen Yorkston, Brighton*

Liberty City Stories on the PSP – great, but only if you're old enough.



**Dean says:** By law, the shops aren't allowed to sell games to people younger than the age rating on the box, but they really are allowed to do just what you described. That doesn't make it right though, and although you didn't say in your letter how the mother responds, we hope that she didn't buy it. And you're right. If people stuck to the games that they're legally entitled to play, then a lot of the bad press that gaming gets would go away.

## GROWN-UP GAMING

Why aren't there many shooting games and horror games for the Wii when there's loads for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3. I've got a Wii and want to play GTA IV, but I don't want to have to buy a 360 to do it!

*Nick Aspell, Leeds*



**Chris says:** For starters Nick, the Wii couldn't run GTA IV even if it wanted to, as it needs considerably more power than it's got to do it. And the Wii is also



Resistance Retribution – one of the better games heading to PSP this year.

targeted at a much younger audience, as you can tell by the games for it.

There are a good number of mature games around for the Wii though, but to be honest, you'll have just as much fun with something like Mario Kart or Guitar Hero World Tour.

## THE END OF THE PSP?

My question is: Should I get rid of my PSP now, or is there any more really good games coming out for it? My feeling is that it's come to the end of its life – and I'm thinking of trading it in for a DS – but I wanted to check with you guys first.

*Tim Price, Liverpool*



**Damien says:** Well Tim, there are a few good games still to be released for the PSP, but you're right in thinking that it's coming to the end of its natural cycle. It's also worth remembering though, that there are plenty of top older games around for it, and you can pick those up for a bargain second-hand.

## Gamebytes

## HERO OR VILLAIN?

I've seen PopStar Guitar in the shops, but wanted to see what you thought of it first before buying it. So, what do you think of it?

*Stewart, Aberdeen*

Ah, very wise. The thing is, we like what PopStar Guitar tries to do, and we're very fond of the AirG clip-on adaptor. It's just a shame though, that the game behind it is so very average.

## SPIES LIKE US

Which game would you recommend I get out of Quantum of Solace and Splinter Cell Double Agent for the Wii?

*Garry Mabbutt, Swansea*

Both games are pretty good Garry, but we think that Splinter Cell just has the edge if you're looking for a sneaky spy thriller, as the latest Bond game is much more of a straight shoot-'em-up.

## BOXING CLEVER

I'm after a good boxing game for the Wii, but should I get Facebreaker now or wait until Don King Presents: Prizefighter comes out? Thank you!

*Lee, London*

Well Facebreaker isn't great, so wait for Prizefighter.

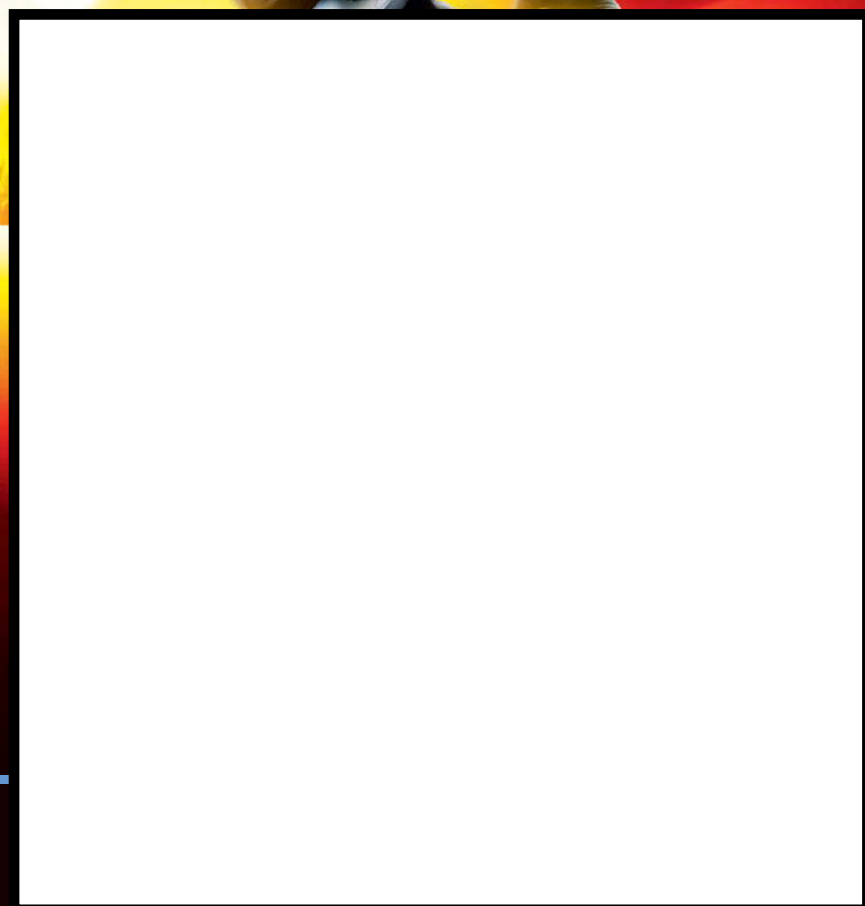
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